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Georgia Library Spotlight - Piedmont Regional Library System, Winder, Georgia

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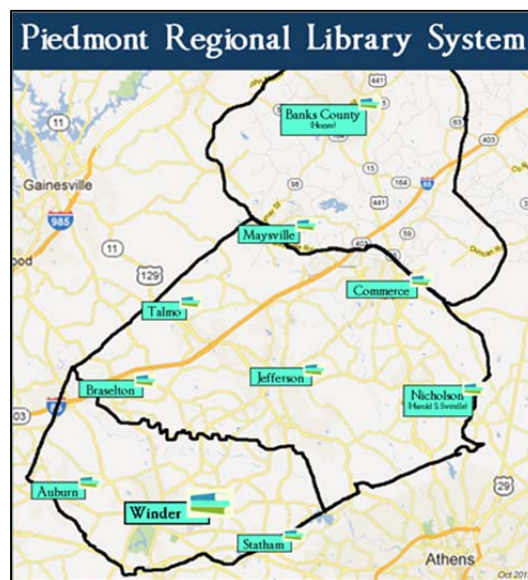


Piedmont Regional Library System Winder, Georgia

The Piedmont Region consists of three counties, Banks, Barrow and Jackson. The Piedmont Regional Library System is located northeast of Atlanta and surrounded by Hall County, Athens Regional, Uncle Remus, Gwinnett and Northeast Georgia Regional libraries. As one local advocate said, "How can we help but be a successful library system?"

As written in *Beadland to Barrow*, steps were taken in 1954 to set up a regional library in Barrow County. In under 60 years, the Piedmont Regional Library System (PRLS) has grown to serve Banks, Barrow and Jackson counties with ten locations in Winder, Auburn, Statham, Homer, Braselton, Commerce, Jefferson, Maysville, Nicholson, and Talmo. Regional offices are located in Winder, and there are also book deposit collection points in the city halls of Bethlehem and Carl. The Library provides courier service to all locations. The Outreach Services department delivers books to public schools in the region as well as senior centers, boys and girls clubs, and other local facilities.

The Library's collection consists of over 252,000 items. The population of the region is around 150,000. Over 457,000 visits are made to the libraries each year. More than 142,500 computer sessions were logged on Library computers last year, and wireless computer access is popular at almost all locations. On February 1, 2012, the Library began offering an ebook checkout service through Overdrive. A \$15,000 grant from Jackson EMC provided start-up funds and a small collection of less than 500 books, all bestselling fiction and nonfiction for



adults. Of this initial collection, 97.8% of titles checked out at least once in the first three

months! The results were so positive that other organizations in the region donated more money to purchase more ebooks. What started as a small, specialized collection has grown to a diverse collection of ebooks for all ages. Currently, the ebook collection consists of over 1,400 ebooks and averages 1,000 checkouts per month.

Continuing staff development is an integral part of PRLS philosophy. The annual Staff Day held in November is highly anticipated by staff throughout the region. Library Managers come together frequently to keep current on professional issues such as technology, staff management, collection development, and intellectual freedom. In turn, libraries in the region offer training programs to their patrons on topics such as basic computer skills, job searching, genealogy, and more.

Piedmont Regional Library System is a proud member of PINES. Over 582,000 items were checked out in FY 2012, including books, DVD's, books on CD, and more. Libraries in the region each have their own Friends of the Library groups and plan their own programs. Approximately 40,000 people attended programs throughout the region last year, including Ready to Read Pre-K Storytimes, reading to dogs programs, adult author and craft programs, numerous summer reading

events, and much more. The Library recently added Early Literacy Station computers for kids at several locations, and plans to add at least ten more stations by the end of the year.

At Piedmont Regional Library System, staff and patrons alike believe, "Books are just the beginning."

To learn more about the Piedmont Regional Library System, please visit <http://prlib.org>.